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State budget shortfall may force COD to cut 200 classes

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College of the Desert plans to slash about 200 classes next school year in response to state budget cuts.

COD has to cut about \$1 million to \$1.7 million from the 2011-12 budget based on Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed \$400 million cut from the California Community College system, officials told the board of trustees on Friday.

About \$600,000 would come from eliminating, reducing or changing the way certain classes are offered. Some classes might cost more.

A variety of classes are on the table — remedial classes, those with low enrollment, general education classes for transfer students, classes not connected to a degree and non-credit classes such as adult education, GED classes and English as a second language.

About 97 percent of COD students take remedial classes in math and English.

College of the Desert cut about 50 classes in fall 2009, 120 classes in spring 2010 and eliminated most summer school offerings.

The final class schedule should be completed by April 1.

"If they cut remedial classes, that would be a big issue," said Dennis Lam, 20, who is the communications officer with the Associated Students of College of the Desert.

"The remedial classes are needed for them to be prepared. It shouldn't cost them more," he said.

In the best case — a cut of \$1 million — the college would save about \$400,000 by not filling vacant positions, including the vice president of student affairs and two director positions.

In the school's worst budget scenario — which would happen if the proposed tax extension is not passed — another \$700,000 would need to be cut, said COD President Jerry Patton.

"We're taking it a little bit slower," Patton said. "Hoping that we might have some relief, that some miracle might happen."
